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| 10/028,327 | 12/21/2001 | Michelle A. Miller | TI-32679 | 4258 |

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EXAMINER

KE, PENG

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2174

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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES**

Application Number: 10/028,327
Filing Date: December 21, 2001
Appellant(s): MILLER ET AL.

Michelle A Miller
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 9/6/05 appealing from the Office action mailed 3/10/05.

(1) Real Party in Interest

A statement identifying by name the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(3) Status of Claims

The statement of the status of claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) Status of Amendments After Final

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief is correct.

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

The appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal is correct.

(7) Claims Appendix

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

(8) Evidence Relied Upon

6430584

Corner

08-2002

(9) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 5, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salas et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,317,686 in view of Corner et al. (US 6,430,584).

As per claim 1, Salas teaches a user interface for a spreadsheet computer program comprising:

a spreadsheet display having rows and columns of cells (see Salas, column 7, lines 1 – 5);
a cursor operable by a user input which indicates at least one currently selected cell (see Salas, column i6, lines 33 – 38); and
a cell edit line which allows the user to enter a mathematical expression with a sequence of entries (see Salas, figure 4a, item 45), wherein the user interface stores the results of the mathematical expression for display in the selected cell but does not store the mathematical expression and displays the results in the cell (see Salas, figure 4a, item 47a, column 12, lines 46 – 53 and column 13, lines 33 – 36).

However, Salas fails to teach not store the mathematical expression in the selected cell.

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Corner teaches not store the mathematical expression in the selected cell. (col. 6, lines 16-30; It is inherent when no formula or equation is entered into the cell and no formula or equation is embedded with in the cell, no mathematical expression is stored in the selected cell.)

It would have been obvious to an artisan at the time of the invention to include Corner's teaching with method of Salas in order to provide user with the ability to handle intermediate calculation without having to enter formulas into the worksheet.

As per claims 5 and 9, they are of similar scope to claim 1 and are rejected under the same rationale (see rejection above).

Claims 2 – 4, 6 – 8, and 10 – 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over by Salas et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,317,686 in view of Corner et al. (US 6,430,584) in view of Spencer et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,603,021.

As per claim 2, which is dependent on claim 1, Salas and Corner teach the user interface of claim 1 (see rejection above). They fail to teach the user interface of Claim 1, wherein an entry preceded with a "+" or "=" sign is stored as an expression or formula and the result displayed in the cell.

Spencer discloses wherein an entry preceded with a "+" or "=" sign is stored as an expression or formula and the result displayed in the cell (see Spencer, column 9, lines 19 – 25).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the method of Spencer with the user interface of Salas and Corner in order to specify input of formulas.

As per claim 3, which is dependent on claim 2, Salas, Corner and Spencer teach the user interface of claim 2 (see rejection above). Salas and Corner does not teach the user interface of Claim 2, wherein an entry preceded with a special symbol is stored as text and the text displayed in the cell.

Spencer teaches wherein an entry preceded with a special symbol is stored as text and the text displayed in the cell (see Spencer, column 9, lines 1 – 3).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the method of Spencer with the user interface of Salas and Corner in order to specify input of text strings.

As per claim 4, which is dependent on claim 3, Salas, Corner and Spencer teach the user interface of claim 3 (see rejection above). Salas does not teach the user interface of Claim 3, wherein the special symbol is selected from the following: a quotation mark, and space.

Spencer teaches wherein the special symbol is selected from the following: a quotation mark, and space (see Spencer, column 9, lines 1 – 3).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the method of Spencer with the user interface of Salas and Corner in order to specify input of text strings.

As per claims 6 – 8 and 10 – 12, they are of similar scope to claims 2 – 4, respectively, and are rejected under the same rationale (see rejections above).

(10) Response to Argument

Applicant's arguments focused on the following:

A) Salas and Corner fail to teach “a cell edit line which allows the user to enter a mathematical expression with a sequence of entries, wherein the user interface stores the results of the mathematical expression for display in the selected cell but does not store the mathematical expression, and displays the results in the cell” individually or in combination.

B) There is no motivation to combine Corner's teaching with Salas's interface.

Examiner disagrees.

A) The combination of Corner's teaching and Salas' interface teaches “a cell edit line which allows the user to enter a mathematical expression with a sequence of entries, wherein the user interface stores the results of the mathematical expression for display in the selected cell but does not store the mathematical expression, and displays the results in the cell,” even though neither one of the references teaches this limitation individually.

Salas teaches “a cell edit line which allows the user to enter a mathematical expression with a sequence of entries.” (see Salas, figure 4a, item 45, column 12, lines 35-45; Salas explicitly states that a formula is entered into a cell) However, Salas fails to teach storing only the results of the mathematical expression in the selected cell and not the mathematical expression.

Corner teaches storing the results of the mathematical expression in the selected cell without storing the mathematical expression. However, Corners' selected cell is in fact an auto-calculator for a spreadsheet, and is not displayed within the spreadsheet.

By combining Corner's teaching with Salas' interface together, which would make every cell of Salas' spread sheets an auto-calculator, the limitation recited in the claims 1, 5, and 9 is met.

B) In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992).

In this case, Corner provides a motivation to combine its teaching with another spreadsheet interface and that is to handle intermediate calculation without actually having to type in the formulas. (column 2, lines 10-13) Although, Corner does not explicitly suggest converting every cell into an auto-calculator, there is a need to do so. Because every cell of Salas' spreadsheets requires a user to type in the formulas, every cell should include an auto-calculator so it can handle a calculation without this prerequisite.

(11) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix

No decision rendered by a court or the Board is identified by the examiner in the Related Appeals and Interferences section of this examiner's answer.

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For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,

Peng Ke

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